

A
CURRICULUM
RESOURCE
GUIDE
FOR
TEACHERS



MANY HANDS MAKE A MURAL

Mural Magic And Hands-on Learning

The Mural Magic project is intended to be an active learning experience for young people. We've designed this guide as a resource to help you involve your mural team in a meaningful group project. Please read it before beginning your mural.

Structure the project to the maturity and talents of the individuals you're working with. Involve them in each stage of making the mural, and encourage them to feel comfortable sharing their ideas and learning from one another. Promote discussion; give information only when needed to augment what's already

been said. In devising a work schedule, allot as much time as possible for thought and group discussion. If at all possible, don't rush the process.

The experience of working as a group - discussing, researching, planning, making decisions and

finally creating a mural for public exhibition - is a model of the process that takes place before the curtain rises and a play or an opera is performed before an audience. What occurs "behind the scenes" is of great educational importance.



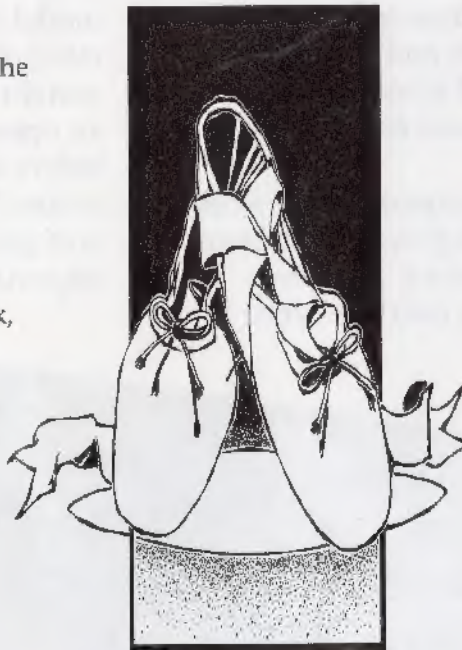
Figure 1 Janet Taylor Pickett, *Hands on Healing*, 1983-85, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Acrylic on panel, 8 ft. x 100 ft.

DISCUSS MURAL MAGIC AND THE NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Your mural is being made in celebration of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) in Newark. This Center will be a four-building, 12-acre arts complex that will include open space and plazas. The Center will incline to the Passaic River and fit into a planned waterfront village of shops, offices, and residences. The first building, which houses a 2,700-seat multi-use performance hall and a 500-seat theater, is scheduled to open in the fall of 1996.

Your mural team, their families and friends, are invited to attend the *Mural Magic Unveiling Event* at NJPAC during the end of May, 1994. At that time, the young muralists will have the opportunity to view murals sent from schools and community groups all over New Jersey and to meet fellow muralists. Assembled around the construction site, the murals will become one big "patchwork" mural. This *Unveiling Event* is intended to honor the talented muralists and their artwork.

NJPAC represents the vital union of urban revitalization and educational enrichment. Ask your team to discuss what this may mean and to consider NJPAC's importance to Newark, to New Jersey, to children, and to educators throughout the state. This will prepare them for the next topic of discussion.



THINKING ABOUT THE PERFORMING ARTS

Although your mural may be concerned with one specific performing art, discuss other arts disciplines with your mural team. In addition to augmenting their understanding of what NJPAC will one day contribute, this discussion will enhance their ability to appreciate what the other Mural Magic participants have accomplished.



What do each of the following quotes mean to you?

- "Song is existence."
- Rainer Maria Rilke
- "All the world's a stage."
- William Shakespeare
- "How can we know the dancer from the dance?"
- William Butler Yeats

Why, from the beginning of civilization, have songs, dance, stories, acting, and music been a part of communication, celebration, entertainment, and ritual?

The arts are an expression of life, of moments great and small, extraordinary and ordinary. Birth, death, love, marriage, growth and change, loss, misery and ecstasy are all the subject for art.

Through art we view humanity's hopes and dreams, ideas, cultural similarities and differences, and a chronicle of history.

How do we know about the performing arts of time past?

There is no written record of the performing arts in some societies, while in others such as ancient Egypt, we see the performing arts depicted in painting. Some early cultures recorded songs and stories in words. Musical notation has been a part of culture for some time; although not all cultures or musicians have written their music down for posterity. Photographers made it possible to capture the 19th century stage and its singers, actors, and dancers. Phonographs made it possible for us to hear the great Caruso sing. We have recordings of singers in Mississippi and fiddlers in Appalachia in the 1920s because of technology begun by Thomas Edison at the turn of the century. Today satellites and television enable us to experience live performances from around the world.

How does the experience of being a performer differ from being a member of the audience?

Have your students imagine what it is like to perform. It is not unlike being muralists. Different skills are required for observing and creating. The artist/performer has a responsibility to the viewer just as the viewer has a responsibility as an audience-member. When your students view the murals made by others, they will have had both experiences.

Take your muralists to a live performance related to your mural theme. If that is not possible, show an appropriate videotape, listen to an appropriate recording, etc. Having an experience with the performing arts is integral to being able to communicate that experience in a mural.

THINKING ABOUT MURALS

A mural is a painting done on a wall directly, such as a fresco, or onto panels that are then mounted onto a wall. Ancient peoples from all over the world painted on walls. In the 1930s mural making underwent a renaissance in the United States when the Federal Government sponsored mural making projects. Many of these murals, both realistic and abstract, were influenced by the Mexican Muralist movement. In the 1960s community groups revived mural making as a means of expressing local political concerns, and larger issues about race, poverty, and peace.

**How does a mural differ from a painting?
What is the difference between a public work of art, such as a mural, and a painting made to be hung in a home or museum?**

Murals are often made for public buildings. A work of art made for the public must be clear in

its imagery and intentions, whereas paintings can be personal to an artist, without being understood by the majority of people. Muralists, as public artists, hold a position of responsibility in making sure that the symbols they use can be understood by a majority.

In your folder, you will find a set of xeroxes corresponding to the artwork illustrated in this Curriculum Resource Guide. Please display and discuss these with your mural team. The mural examples will give your team an overview of the various public purposes murals have served. Whenever possible, we've provided images that relate to the performing arts. They should serve as inspiration to your mural team and reinforce the notion that you are working in an old and great tradition. A discussion of the non-murals will help your team think further about the formal elements of art, such as composition, style, and movement.



Figure 2 *Egyptian Wall Painting, New Kingdom. XVIII Dynasty, c. 1425-1417 BC, Thebes, Tomb of Nakht.*

This fragment of a mural was painted on a tomb wall. The musicians and an offering bearer stand before Nakht and his wife at the funerary banquet. Note the outlining, flat color and flat background, the repetition of line and color, the faces in profile and how hieroglyphics and different scenes come together in the same space of the mural - trademarks of most Egyptian painting from this period.



Figure 3 *Rehearsal for Greek Satyr Play, House of the Tragic Poet, Pompeii, Mosaic, 22 7/8" x 23" x 14"*

This mosaic mural gives us a look at an ancient play in rehearsal. The play's director, seated, instructs the actors to keep in step with the pipe music. Behind him an actor changes into costume. The hand-cut tiles add rhythm to the mosaic. Though you are not making a mosaic, you can get composition ideas and even stylistic inspiration from looking at art from the past. Compare this mosaic to the Egyptian mural.



Figure 4 *Diego Rivera, The Making of a Fresco, Showing the Building of a City, April - June 1931, true fresco, 22'7" x 29'9", San Francisco Art Institute*

This mural, commissioned for an art school, depicts both the making of a mural and the construction of a city. Similarly, your mural celebrates the building of a performing arts center. The coordinated activities of workers and planners are seen through a scaffold that supports the fresco painter (the artist himself with his back toward the viewer.) Note how the mural fits into the architecture of the building and how Rivera has divided the mural into several scenes using the scaffolding as a framing device. Diego Rivera was one of three great Mexican muralists. He, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Jose Clemente Orozco influenced hundreds of artists in the United States during the 1930s.



Figure 5 *Stuart Davis, Study for "History of Communications" Mural, 1939, Ink on paper, 9 5/8" x 29 7/8", Minnesota Museum of Art, Saint Paul*

This drawing was one of several studies made for a gigantic mural executed for the 1939 World's Fair. Here we see a compilation of images conveying the development of various means of communicating throughout history. Davis wanted the mural to be "simple and easy to remember" and so decided to limit the colors to white and black. Note the energy and movement of the eye and mind as it looks at this drawing.

Figure 6
Aaron Douglas, *Aspects of Negro Life: Song of the Towers*, 1934, Oil on canvas, 9 x 9', The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Art & Artifacts Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations



During the Depression, this African-American artist completed a monumental four-panel mural that blended history, religion, myth, politics, and social issues. The first panel depicts African life, with tribal music and drums. The two middle panels depict slavery and emancipation, the rebuilding of the South, and the flight of Blacks to the cities. This, the final panel, returns to music again. This time as a symbol of freedom. Note the power of the central figure. Note, too, that the figures are silhouetted. See the section, *An Alternative: Making A Silhouette Mural* in this guide. Compare to other mural examples, especially the Egyptian one.



Figure 7 Edgar Degas, *Orchestra at the Opera*, 1868-69. Oil on canvas, 0.53 x 0.45 m., Musée National du Louvre, Paris

This work is special because Degas gives us the point of view of a musician in the darkened orchestra pit. Only a bottom slice of the illuminated stage is shown. This painting expresses how every part of the performance is alive; it captures the magic of being in a theater. Notice the lighting and what is shown and what is not shown. Compare to Diego Rivera and the Egyptian mural, especially in the horizontal layering.

Figure 8
Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Jane Avril at the Jardin de Paris*, 1883 Lithograph, 1.30 x 0.95 m., The Art Institute of Chicago



This poster announcing a Jane Avril performance is remarkable for its sketch-like quality. Even though you are not seeing this work in color, please note the graphic quality of the flat color and the outlining. Avril's skirt is one color, her stockings and gloves another. Notice how the musician's instrument becomes the frame through which we see the dancer depicted mid pose. Our ability to read the musical notes places us right on stage. Compare to the Degas painting and the other xeroxes.



Figure 9
William Johnson, *Jitterbugs (V)*, c. 1941-42, Oil on wood, 36 1/2 x 28 3/4 in., Hampton University Museum, Hampton, Virginia

After spending many years painting in Denmark, this African-American artist returned to Harlem, New York in 1938. He was enthralled by the cabarets and nightlife there. For the next six years, he worked endlessly to capture the spirit and flavor of the Black experience in postwar America. Note that Johnson uses heavy paint, and that he discards all nonessential elements. Each area of color rhymes with other areas of color or pattern, such as the jitterbugger's jacket. Note how the figures and instruments seem alive. For example, even the hat isn't resting on the ground. Note, too, the outlining and the expressive changes in scale.

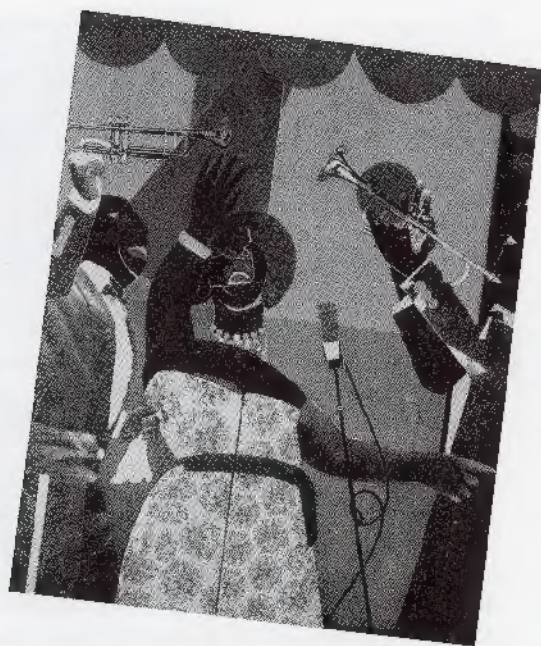


Figure 10
Romare Bearden
Showtime, 1974
collage with acrylic
and lacquer on board

This is one of 19 collages that comprise Bearden's series, "Of the Blues". These collages trace jazz from folk songs, sacred and secular, to the major styles which evolved in different cities around the United States. The energy of Bearden's musicians comes from his use of color and the role collage plays. Bearden wanted the collages to have an improvisational quality that would reflect the abstract sounds of jazz.

MAKING YOUR MURAL

FROM CONCEPT ... TO COLOR

Now you are ready, as a team, to conceptualize your mural. Ideas should come from the muralists, and you should help foster dialogue. If, for instance, your mural is about theater, list the images that come to mind when the individuals in your mural team think of the theater: rehearsals, playbills, the curtain dramatically rising, the actors taking a bow, intermission, the Greek comedy and tragedy masks, the spotlight. Most importantly, ideas should come from them.

After the first brainstorming session, use a local library to flesh out the theme further. Locate photographs, paintings, encyclopedia entries, and other reference materials from which to borrow ideas. Don't plunge right in to making a final sketch. Give the team time to think and develop ideas.

Next, develop sketches. If team members are uncomfortable drawing, a collage can substitute for a sketch. When the team reconvenes, they should discuss the sketches and decide which one, or which parts of each, will be included in the mural.

Once you have your final pencil sketch, xerox copies of it, and have the team experiment with adding color. Discuss and select a final version. Do not improvise color when painting; work your ideas out ahead of time.

THE SIZE OF YOUR SKETCH

To simplify translating your sketch onto the mural, we recommend that your sketch correspond to the size and format of your mural. All the murals will be eight feet tall. The width is dependent on how many panels your mural contains.

Mural size	Recommended sketch size	
	width-height	width-height
Single panel mural	4ft. x 8ft.	4in. x 8in.
Two-panel mural	8ft. x 8ft.	8in. x 8in.
Three-panel mural	12ft. x 8ft.	12in. x 8 in.

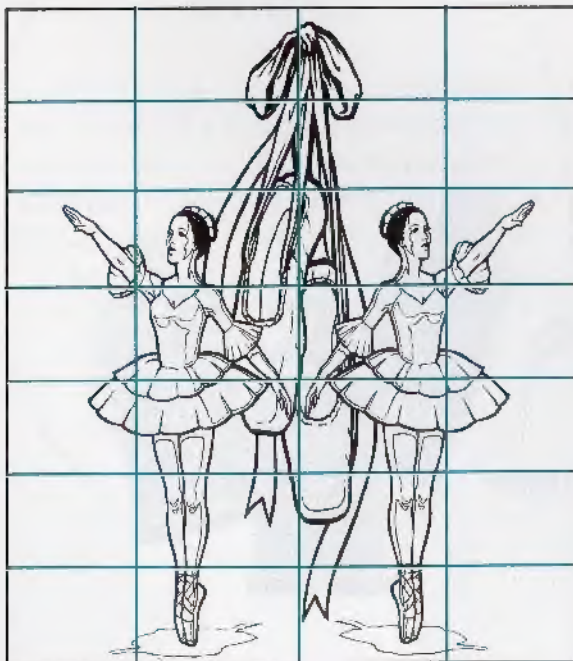
ENLARGING YOUR IMAGE: GRIDDING THE SKETCH AND MURAL PANELS

To translate your sketch onto the mural, you must first divide the sketch and the mural into a grid containing an identical number of squares. A one-inch square on the sketch is equal to a one-foot square of the mural. Draw the grid in pencil over the sketch. Use a ruler to ensure straight lines and equally sized squares.

Drawing a grid onto the mural is somewhat more complicated. To draw the vertical lines first, mark with a ruler one foot from the panel's left edge at the top, middle, and bottom of the mural. Carefully connect the marks to create the first vertical line one foot from the left edge. To create the next vertical line measure one foot from the line you just made, and so on. If your mural is composed of more than one panel, grid each separately.

Assign a number to each square on your gridded sketch and to the corresponding square of the mural. For example, the upper left-hand corner square of your sketch and of your mural should both be marked #1.

After assigning numbers, copy the contents of square #1 of your sketch onto square #1 of your mural. Continue until the entire sketch has been enlarged onto the mural. Focus on translating the major lines and movements at this stage. Later on you'll fill in color and detail.



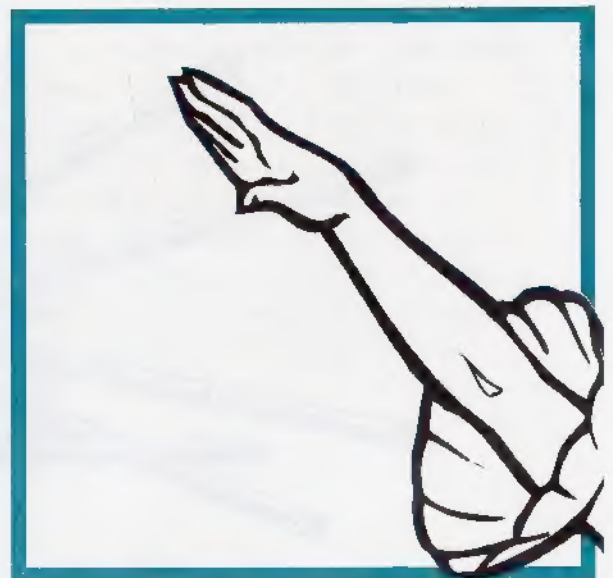
PAINTING THE MURAL

Once you've enlarged your sketch onto the mural, painting can begin. For easy reference, display your sketch or copies of the sketch for all to see.

Do not paint one section of the mural to completion while leaving other sections untouched. Complete one stage at a time. This will enable you to make assessments and adjustments at each stage of painting, resulting in a more unified mural.

Make certain the muralists understand the chronology of each painting stage before they commence painting:

1. Outline the important figures using black paint or any other single color.
2. Fill in areas of color.
3. Add shading and details.
4. Outline again, if necessary.



AN ALTERNATIVE - MAKING A SILHOUETTE MURAL

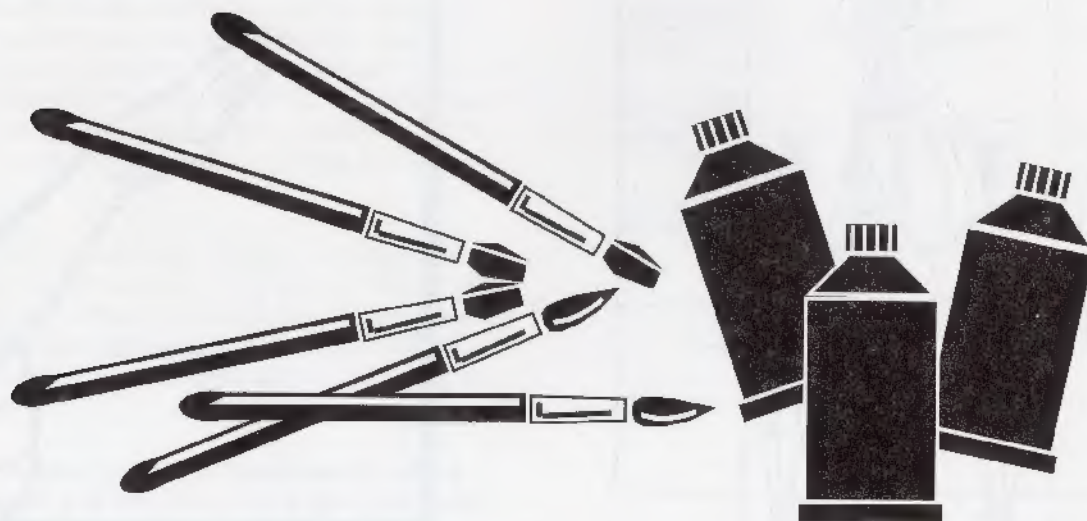
A silhouette mural entails a different working method. Team members take on the poses of dancers, actors and musicians, for example, depending on your mural's theme. When light is shined on them dramatic shadows are cast. By tracing these shadows in pencil, either onto paper or directly onto the mural, you will be creating a silhouette mural. You may want to practice poses and tracing before working directly on the mural.

Experiment with placing people at different distances from the light for variations in size. A person standing near the light source will loom larger than a person far away. Explore varying the angle of the light. Notice how the shadows change when shining the light up from the floor or down from a chair.

CARE AND HANDLING OF PAINT AND BRUSHES

This information, an important part of the educational experience of mural making, should be shared with all muralists.

- Make sure your workroom is adequately ventilated.
- Cover the floor with drop cloths before beginning to paint. Let drop cloths dry before folding up at the end of the day or the end of the project.
- Read paint can labels for directions.
- When mixing colors, make sure paint is thoroughly blended before using. It's difficult to remix a color later on, so be sure to mix enough the first time; you may need paint to touch-up areas after the mural is completed. Save mixed colors in coffee cans with lids for later use.
- Keep paint cans on a table so muralists don't have to bend over to dip their brushes in paint.
- Have water and non toxic hand cleanser nearby.
- Wash brushes whenever changing colors. At the end of each day, wash brushes with warm water. Do not sit brushes in water overnight. Do not place brushes bristles-down in cans.
- Cover paint cans with lids when not in use. Cover tightly at the end of each day to avoid spilling and to keep skin from forming on the top of the paint.
- Gather paints and materials together in one clean, organized storage place.



PERFORMING ARTS BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR STUDENTS

The following books are recommended for young people. You might consider planning a semester-long reading project in conjunction with the New Jersey Performing Arts Center's Mural Magic project. Books recommended for younger readers might also interest older ones, who might even get mural ideas from picture book illustrations.

Charlie Parker Played Be Bop, Written and illustrated by Chris Raschka, Orchard Books, grades k-2.

Ben's Trumpet, Rachel Isadora. Story of a young African American child who plays an invisible trumpet and is inspired by the music he hears from the nearby Zig Zag Jazz Club. Greenwillow Books. Won a Caldecott Honor, grades k-2.

The Philharmonic Gets Dressed, Karla Kuskin, illustrated by Marc Simont. 105 members of an orchestra bathe, get dressed, and go to work, grades k-2.

Angelina on Stage, Katharine Holabird, illustrated by Helen Craid. About a little mouse who wants to be a ballerina and gets her hearts desire. *Angelina Ballerina* is another book in the series, grades k-2

Peter And The Wolf, illustrated by Jorg Muller, Knopf, 1986. Story book placed in a European Opera House setting. The relationship of the musical instruments to the characters becomes clear and even the role of the conductor, grades k-4.

The Red Shoes, Hans Christian Andersen, illustrated by Chihior Iwasaki, Harper and Row, grades 3 and up.

Aida, as told by Leontyne Price, illustrated by Leo and Dianne Dillon, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990. Retells the story of Verdi's opera, grades 4-12.

Song and Dance Man, Karen Ackerman, illustrated by Steven Gamell. Grandfather talking about days in vaudeville. Caldecott Medal winner, Knopf, grades k-3.

Josephine Baker, Alan Schroeder. Introduced by Coretta Scott King. Chelsea House, grades 5 and up.

Raggin', Barbara Mitchell, illustrated by Hetty Mitchell. A story about Scott Joplin. The life story of the Texan who became a popular composer and sought to elevate ragtime to the level of classical music. Carolrhoda Books, Inc., grades 3 - 6.

The Great Jazz Artists, James Lincoln Collier. Surveys the lives and music of such well-known jazz performers as Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong, Billie Holliday, Charlie Parker and others, Four Winds Press, 1977, grades 5 and up.

The Nutcracker, E.T.A. Hoffman, illustrated by Maurice Sendak, Crown, 1984. Won the New York Times Best Illustrated Book. Middle level reading book, all grades.

A Mozart Season, Virginia Euwer Wolff. About a girl who is a violinist, H. Holt and Co., grades 6-8.

Paul Robeson; The Life and Times of a Free Black Man, Virginia Hamilton, Harper Collins, grades 7 - 12.

Don't Explain: A Song of Billie Holliday, Alexis de Veaux. Writers and Readers, grades 9 and up.

Midnight Hour Encores, Bruce Brooks. A Harper Collins novel, 1988, grades 7 and up.

Swan Lake, Mark Helpirn. Illustrated by Chris Van Allsburg, Houghton Mifflin, 1979. Adaptation of the classic ballet, grades 4- 12.

What To Listen For In Music, Aaron Copeland, Dutton, grades 9 - 12.

GLOSSARY

audience • chronology • composition • concept • correspond • enlarge • grid • maquette
performer • posterity • public • silhouette • style • translate • unveiling • stylization



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